

## 11. A LARGE COMMUNAL ROOST OF BLACKWINGED KITES *ELANUS CAERULEUS*

The blackwinged kite *Elanus caeruleus* is found single or in widely scattered pairs, and roosts communally at night in leafy trees (Ali & Ripley, HANDBOOK Vol. 1, pp 53, 1987).

However, on 4th August, 1995, around 1730 hrs on the way near village Bihejhar, Raipur district, Madhya Pradesh, a large congregation of about 35 birds was seen perched on electric lines and flying over a portion of a mulberry plantation in a silk farm. Some of the birds were

observed surveying the plantation below.

The birds were using the electric wire as a pre-roosting site. Although communal roosting has been recorded, birds in such large numbers have not been reported.

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## 12. RECORD OF CHIR PHEASANT, *CATREUS WALLICHI* ABOVE 4545 METRES IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS

On 9th October, 1995, we were on our way to Dhum-Dhar-Kandi Pass from Rishikesh, Uttar Pradesh. About 0.75 km before Dharoadhari (alt. 4848 m), the conventional site for Camp-1 of Black Peak expeditions, we came across a pair of chir pheasants, *Catreus wallichi*. The location (31.03° N & 78.34° E) is immediately before the meeting point of Kalanag Icefall and Bandarpunch Glacier that was about 300 m below us. The Survey of India contour map showed the altitude of the location to be above 4545 m. It was before the sliding zone to the South of Sargarohini - IV peak. The terrain was boulder-strewn rocky slope intermingled with grass patches. The chiefly buffy white and pale rusty upperparts, overall size, closely barred graduated tail with black and ashy grey and prominent crest were unmistakable. Their blackish abdomen, rounded wings and the long graduated tail were conspicuous in flight. The pair flew over us and settled on the slope 100 m

above the foot-trail. They were alternatively crouching and leaping up as they moved along the slope chuckling noisily. There was a male and a female, as indicated by the difference in their size. I have seen chir pheasants earlier at lower altitudes (c. 3030 m) but never at this altitude. I used 8x30 binoculars for my identification.

According to Sálim Ali & S.D. Ripley, HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, OUP, Delhi, (1983) chir pheasants are resident in the Himalayas between c. 1400 and 3500 m altitude. My record from a much higher altitude of over 4545 m might indicate that these birds are distributed over a larger area than is presumed at present.

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## 13. ADDITIONAL COOT (*FULICA ATRA* LINN.) BREEDING SITE RECORDS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

Ali and Ripley (1983) state that coot *Fulica atra* Linn. is a resident as well as a common and abundant winter visitor to India especially on larger jheels in northern India. It breeds

sporadically in peninsular India during July to August, and further south, the season is from November to December.

During the last two decades coot numbers